

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 271621Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 488
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO
USEC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 4170

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS: VIEWS OF MADRID CARDINAL
TARANCON

1. AT HIS INVITATION, I LUNCHEDED, MAY 25, WITH MADRID
CARDINAL ENRIQUE TARANCON, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SPANISH
BISHOP'S CONFERENCE, AND HENCE SPAIN'S MOST INFLUENTIAL
CHURCHMAN. HIS SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIZATION AND HUMAN
RIGHTS ARE WELL KNOWN AND THE CHURCH HAS BEEN A POSITIVE
ELEMENT IN THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION. ALSO PRESENT WERE
MONSIGNOR MARTIN PATINO, VICAR GENERAL OF THE MADRID
ARCHDIOCESE AND THE CARDINAL'S PRINCIPAL ADVISOR ON
CHURCH/STATE AND POLITICAL MATTERS AS WELL AS TWO EMBOFFS.
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2. CARDINAL TARANCON SHOWED UNDERSTANDABLE CONCERN ABOUT
THE POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN,
BUT FELT THAT FREE ELECTIONS WOULD COME OFF IN
REASONABLE FASHION. CERTAINLY SUAREZ WOULD STAY ON
AND HIS UCD (UNION CENTRO DEMOCRATICO) WOULD EMERGE
WITH A PLURALITY, REPRESENTING THE CENTER RIGHT. IN

THE NEW CORTES IT WAS LIKELY TO SEEK ALLIANCE WITH SOME ELEMENTS OF THE ALIANZA POPULAR. MARTIN PATINO, WHOSE POLITICAL CONTACTS ARE WIDESPREAD ADDED THAT THERE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE CENTER LEFT (INTO WHICH HE PUT THE GONZALEZ-LED PSOE SOCIALISTS) IF THE DRAFTING OF A CONSTITUTION WERETO BE A CREDIBLE OPERATION. THE CARDINAL NOTED THAT ABOVE ALL THE NEW CONSTITUTION COULD NOT REPEAT THE ERRORS OF THE PAST IN BECOMING A CONSTITUTION DRAFTED BY SOME AND REJECTED BY OTHERS.

3. MARTIN PATINO ALSO FELT THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, CURRENTLY DIVIDED BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC TEAM LED BY RUIZ GIMENEZ AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS WITHIN THE SUAREZ COALITION, WOULD MAKE SERIOUS EFFORTS TO UNITE AFTER ELECTION DAY. THE CARDINAL SAID THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAD A DEFINITE ROLE TO FILL ON THE CENTER LEFT, INASMUCH AS THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS IN SPAIN WHICH MIGHT HAVE FILLED THAT GAP WERE QUITE WEAK. WHEN THE ISSUE OF THE PSOE MARXIST COLORATION WAS RAISED, THE CARDINAL EXPRESSED SOME DOUBT AS TO HOW REAL THAT WAS, SEEING IT IN PART AS AN ELECTORAL TACTIC TO TAKE VOTES FROM THE PCE. I NOTED THAT WHATEVER ELSE MIGHT BE SAID ABOUT THE PSOE IT SEEMED DOUBTFUL THAT FELIPE GONZALEZ WAS A DOGMATIC DEVOTEE OF MARXISM. THE CARDINAL ALSO WONDERED IF THE CURRENT COOLNESS BETWEEN SUAREZ AND GONZALEZ WOULD NOT PASS AFTER THE ELECTIONS, SINCE IT WAS QUITE CONVENIENT FOR GONZALEZ TO TAKE CONFIDENTIAL

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A HARD OPPOSITION STANCE NOW.

4. THE CARDINAL , WHO SAID HE HAD HAD A BISHOPRIC IN CATALUNYA FOR 17 YEARS, EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN ABOUT THE REGIONAL PROBLEM. PROBABLY THE CATALAN ISSUE WAS MANAGEABLE BUT THE BASQUE ISSUE TROUBLED HIM DEEPLY AND HE WAS NOT SURE WHAT COULD BE DONE TO END THE TRAGIC CYCLE OF VIOLENCE. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUESTION ABOUT THE ATTITUDES OF THE SPANISH MILITARY, THE CARDINAL NOTED THAT THE MILITARY HERE WERE VERY MUCH A CLOSED PRESERVE WITH THE NAVY BEING THE MOST CLOSED GROUP OF ALL. CLEARLY , THE GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT HAD BEEN EXTREMELY UPSET BY THE LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNISTS, AND A NUMBER OF GENERALS (ALL GENERALS AND ALMOST ALL COLONELS HAVE FOUGHT IN THE CIVIL WAR) WOULD BARELY SPEAK TO SUAREZ AFTERWARDS. NONETHELESS, THE MILITARY HAD COME A LONG WAY HE THOUGHT AND HOPED THAT BECAUSE OF THEIR RESPECT FOR THE "SHADOW OF THE KING" AND BECAUSE

OF SUAREZ'S OWN POLITICAL ABILITY THAT THE MILITARY
WOULD STAY IN LINE.

5. CARDINAL TARANCON WAS PLEASED WITH WHAT HE BELIEVED TO BE
THEGENERALLY ACCEPTED "POLITICAL NEUTRALITY" OF THE CHURCH
IN THESE ELECTIONS (SEE MADRID 3298). MARTIN PATINO
COMMENTED THAT THAT WAS A SATISFYING POSITION TO BE IN
COMPARED TO THE CHRUCH'S EARLIER CLOSE LINKS TO THE
FRANCO REGIME.

HE NOTED THAT 16 PRIESTS WERE RUNNING FOR THE NEW
CORTES (11 FOR THE CONGRESS AND 5 FOR THE SENATE)
WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE CHURCH-- NONE APPARENTLY
WITH ANY REAL CHANCE OF BEING ELECTED. THE CARDINAL
BRUSHED THE MATTER OFF BY COMMENTING THAT MOST WERE
CANDIDATES OF MINOR LEFTIST, LABOR-ORIENTED FRINGE
GROUPS. STABLER

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